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The Independence Movement and the Missionaries

by Samuel H. Moffett

On March 1, 1919, the largest and most influential group of Westerners in Korea was the Christian missionary community. There were some 631 missionaries in Korea that year, of whom 491 were Protestant.[1] It is with the first reactions of this group to the Korean Independence Movement that this brief paper will be concerned.

The Independence Movement of March 1, 1919, was a turning point in the history of Korea under Japanese rule.[2] It was a public uprising and massive protest against Japanese imperialism imposed upon the peninsula beginning with the protectorate of 1905 and the annexation of 1910. Korea's smouldering resentment was fanned by the post-war peace conferences in Paris and Woodrow Wilson's call for "self-determination of small nations." It was sparked into flame by the death of the last real Korean king, Kojong, on Jan. 21, 1919, and the flame exploded into open fire in March when Korean patriots secretly organized a nationwide, non-violent demonstration for freedom timed to take advantage of the King's state funeral scheduled by the Japanese for March 3. Two days before the funeral a Korean Declaration of Independence was signed, read in public at what is now Pagoda Park in Seoul, and circulated with amazing speed throughout the peninsula. There were 33 signers: 15 Christians, 15 Chondokyo and three Buddhists. Police and military response was quick and brutal. But the demonstrations continued for months.

The role of the Western missionary in the movement has sometimes been exaggerated in two very different directions. It has been claimed by some that they actually instigated and directed the demonstrations. Lieut. Gen. Kojima, at that time Commander of the Japanese Gendarmerie in Korea, directly accused the missionaries of starting the protests, and he was supported in the allegation by "a prominent official of the Japanese War Office" who declared that "missionaries are behind the Korean mobs."[3]

On the other hand, some modern nationalist Korean critics of the missionary movement imply that the general missionary attitude was pro-Japanese and anti-Korean. They do not realize perhaps that thereby they are unconsciously adopting a second Japanese propaganda line of 1919,

namely, that the missionaries had no part in the movement and that therefore the Western world could discount as pure nationalist propaganda the wild Korean claims of injustice and persecution. A Japanese-controlled editorial in *The Seoul Press* for March 14, 1919 was headlined, NO FOREIGNERS IMPLICATED IN KOREAN UPRISINGS.[4]

I would prefer to judge Western missionary reaction and involvement by the original accounts and records of the missionaries themselves, as preserved in letters, manuscripts and reports, both published and unpublished, from the actual period in question. Most of my source material comes from the first sixty days of the demonstrations, March and April 1919. The material can be divided into two main categories: (1) personal viewpoints and actions of individual missionaries; and (2) the officially stated position of their missions in Korea.

I. Personal Reactions

Since the first category is personal, perhaps I may be forgiven for beginning on a very superficial level: my own reaction to the Independence Movement (the *sam-il undong*). It was simple and direct. It had to be, for I was only three years old. My earliest memory as a child is of Japanese soldiers or police, with fixed bayonets, breaking into the room in our home in P'yŏngyang where my younger brother and I were supposed to be taking an afternoon nap. They were looking for incriminating documents and demonstrators hiding from the law. But to my brother and me the shouts of "Mansei"[5] and the excitement in the streets seemed like some gigantic happy game, so when the soldiers threw open the door we greeted them with the glad cry we had been hearing so much: "Mansei." It was, of course, a forbidden and dangerous word, a shortened substitute for *Choson Tongnip Mansei*—the slogan of the movement. My father's face went pale, expecting retaliation. There was a moment of tension; then the soldiers broke into a laugh, and left. It wasn't much, but at least I can say I was in the *sam-il undong*.

My oldest brother was more active. He was 15, and on March 3, hearing the noise of shouting he climbed high in an oak tree in our yard to look across to where a crowd of thousands had gathered on the Soongsil College athletic field. Japanese soldiers were trying to clear the field, and seemed to be hauling down a forbidden Korean flag which had been raised on the school flagpole. He saw my father, S.A. Moffett, walk up to the flagpole and either lower the flag himself or take it from a Japanese officer who was already tearing it down (accounts differ). As president of the college, Moffett told the Japanese he was claiming the flag as foreign property. He told the excited crowd, "I will keep this flag until the day when Korea is free to fly it again."[6]

My mother's reaction was complete astonishment. She wrote in her diary for March 1 that the missionaries in P'yŏngyang had been taken utterly by surprise when, at a memorial service attended by some 3,000 Presbyterians for the late Emperor Kojong, the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rev. Kim Sun-Du, instead of closing the meeting after the benediction, held the crowd for a public reading of the Declaration of Independence.[7] It was obvious that the missionaries—with the single possible exception of Frank W. Schofield, who was asked the night before by a friend to come and take pictures of the reading of the Declaration in Pagoda Park in Seoul—[8] not only did not instigate the movement but had no advance warning of its imminence.[9] The credit for the great nonviolent demonstrations of 1919 belongs to the Korean people alone.

Foreign involvement was, therefore, only secondary, not primary. But when we pursue this personal family record further to my father's reaction and connection with the movement, it becomes clear that the involvement while secondary was nevertheless real.

It was not entirely by accident, for example, that he was present at the first reading of the Declaration of Independence in P'yŏngyang. He was too close to leaders of the Christian community not to sense something of unusual import going on. A colleague, Charles F. Bernheisel, whom he had persuaded to go with him, describes the meeting:

> An immense crowd of people assembled in the grounds of the Boys' School (Sung Duk) near Central Church. After a short memorial service for the late king a man came out and read the Declaration of Independence and then led the crowd in a mighty shout of 'Mansei' (or Hurrah) for Korean independence. This was repeated three times and then the meeting was adjourned. Three of us missionaries were standing close inside the main gate. When the meeting adjourned we decided to walk down the hill to the main street.. and see how things were going. After walking for some distance down the main street of the city I happened to look behind us and found that we were leading a long procession. As soon as we had quit the school grounds the crowd (which had armloads of small Korean flags) began to leave also, and, unknown to us, had fallen in behind us

and we were thus in the position of leading the procession down the main street of the city. I told the brethren that we must not continue in this position, and they agreed, so we scooted off into an alley and allowed the crowd to follow other leaders.[10]

It is not perhaps so surprising, then, that some of the authorities believed missionaries were leading the movement. The missionaries, however, did not long remain mere spectators and involuntary participants. The movement quickly spread, and what began as a non-violent protest was soon met with violent repression. My father (to continue the personal note) was among the first to put his name on the line in public and signed a protest against Japanese atrocities. He very early exposed the wide-spread police brutality as unprovoked and not, as the Japanese claimed, a necessary response to Korean violence. On March 5 he wrote to his mission board in New York his own eye-witness account of shocking events in P'yŏngyang for public dissemination, and unlike most such reports, he specified that it could be attributed to him by name. The day before, March 4, he had insisted that the Japanese inspector of schools, a Mr. Yamada, accompany him on a fact-finding tour and verify his charges. He wrote from first-hand observation of beatings, stabbings, clubbings and kickings of girls 12 and 13 years old arrested and marched through the streets.

> The above I saw myself and testify to the truthfulness of my statements. In all my contact with the Koreans these five days (March 1-5), and in all my observation of the crowds inside and outside the city, I have witnessed no act of violence on the part of any Korean.
>
> (Signed) Samuel A. Moffett

Later he wrote:

> On March 4th, five theological students from south Korea arrived and entered the dormitory of the seminary which was to open on the next day. Late in the afternoon when the people were fleeing from the soldiers who were pursuing them with guns, beating and kicking them, the soldiers pursued (them) into the seminary grounds. These five theologues were in their rooms sitting down and had not been out with the crowd nor had they joined in the demonstration. Soldiers suddenly broke open the door and dragged (them) out and took them to the police station where despite their denials they were given short shrift, taken out, arms and legs tied to the four arms of a large wooden cross face downward, and beaten on the naked buttocks with 29 blows of some hard cane or stick till they were all bruised and broken...
>
> In view of this and the danger to all students of arrest and beating without cause; it was decided to postpone the the opening of the Seminary, and the more than 80 students from all over Korea were dismissed to their homes. This was the more inevitable in view of the fact that last night the firemen were let loose on the village where many of the Academy students live and board, and near midnight broke into houses dragging out young men and beating them... Today when the academy and college should have opened after the ex-emperor's funeral, only two students of the academy and eight of the college dared attempt to study, and both were closed until the end of the term this month.[11]

On March 22 and 24 Moffett attended two important conferences in Seoul between aroused missionaries and leading Japanese officials, including the Minister of Justice (Kokubo) and the Minister of Education (Sekiya). It was held at the Chosen Hotel at the invitation of Judge Watanabe, a Presbyterian elder, and a Mr. Katayama. The judge, as chairman, explained that the object of the meeting was "to talk over matters connected with the present regrettable disturbances." Actually, its purpose was an attempt to enlist missionary support for Japanese administrative authorities in Korea against the independence demonstrations. A private report, marked "Not to be Published" is in my possession and is extremely revealing both of government and missionary attitudes at this stage of the movement.

"You have great influence," the Minister of Justice told the ten missionaries present. "If you put forth your effort to quiet the people you will do much service and in this way you will do much for humanity and for peace."[12]

But his plea was politely rejected. Politically, the missionaries replied, they must remain neutral. They had not instigated the movement, nor could they become tools of the Japanese to put it down. The individual responses of some of the missionaries give a frank and representative spectrum of missionary attitudes in that first month of seething activity. Let me quote from four: Samuel A. Moffett, president of what is now Soongjun University; O. R. Avison, president of what is now Yonsei University; Herbert Welch, then Methodist Bishop of Japan and Korea; and W. A. Noble, a Methodist missionary in P'yŏngyang. In essence,

Moffett called for justice; Avison for freedom; Welch for neutrality; and Noble for obedience to the powers that be.

> DR. MOFFETT: I have lived for thirty years in Korea... (and) speak as a very great friend and admirer of the Koreans. I have come to find that they place a higher value on spiritual and moral things than material. (The Japanese had been stressing the material improvements they had brought to Korea.) The thing which appeals to the Korean is justice and justice has a greater appeal to him than anything of a material nature... I find that they appreciate being treated like men and that manhood and worth appeal to them much more than physical comforts.[13]
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> DR. AVISON:... I will mention a few things... without which a man cannot be considered to be free: (1) The right to cherish a national spirit... (2) A free man has the right to the use of his national language. (The Japanese had been supplanting Korean with Japanese in the schools.) (3) Freedom of speech... Every man has the right to think for himself and to express his thoughts freely without fear. If this cannot be done... there will be an outbreak in spite of all attempts at repression... (4) Very similar to this is the right of a free press... (5) Associated with these two is freedom of the right to assemble and freely discuss any problem that affects the well being of the people... (6) Every free man is entitled himself to participate in the government... A man cannot be free when he has no voice concerning the laws by which he is to be governed. One thing that has troubled me in Korea during all the past number of years has been the constant display of the sword as the symbol of government... When I go to see Mr. Sekiya at home... when he has doffed his uniform and sword, and look on his benevolent countenance I feel that I can regard him as a friend. But when I visit him in his office, dressed in his uniform and wearing his sword, I stand before him in fear and trembling. Personally I do not think that Mr. Sekiya really likes his sword.
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> MR. SEKIYA: No, I do not like to wear a sword.
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> DR. AVISON: So I trust that Japan will stand with the Allies to the very end for the freedom of man.[14]
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> BISHOP WELCH:... May I answer definitely why missionaries ought not to intervene? There are three reasons: (1) Interference by missionaries would be ineffective... Most of the demonstrators are non-Christians and outside our influence. I feel sure that even the Christians who have not asked our advice, would not take our advice but... resent it. (2) The people as a whole would resent our interference and the missionary can do his best work only if he has the confidence and affection of the people. (3) It would be highly improper for any missionaries to intervene in a political question. If once admitted that it were proper for missionaries to go into politics it would have to be admitted that they may take part on either side... (Bishop Welch here read the instruction from former Minister Sill in 1897 warning American citizens against taking sides in politics)...[15]

A little earlier the bishop had said:

> Every missionary being a friend of both the Koreans and Japanese is intensely concerned yet we must assume the position of bystanders. It must be clearly recognized that this movement was not instigated by missionaries; it is not even a Christian movement, for most of the leaders and a great majority of the people are not Christian. It is a national movement, a controversy between the people and the existing government... Of course in such a discussion the foreigner has no choice but to stand in a neutral position... Apart from politics there are humanitarian questions involved but even here we do not want to thrust anything on this company.[16]

It was Mr. Noble, the Methodist missionary, who perhaps gave strongest support to the principle of cooperation with government authorities, but even that was coupled with an expression of sympathy for the protesters. Personally Mr. Noble had taught Koreans to be in subjection to powers that be. He said that Koreans felt that under present conditions they had no hope.[17]

What is notable in the record of this conference was not this single reference to the Pauline injunction of obedience to government. That had been a standard, but sometimes circumvented, Christian tradition for centuries. Nor was it the general acceptance by the missionaries of a policy of political neutrality. That had not only been urged on them by their home governments since 1897, but had been the official policy of their mission boards since the pattern-setting Conspiracy Trials (the *paek-*

o-in sa-kon) of 1912.[18] What is really remarkable was that in face-to-face confrontation with the Japanese authorities, the missionaries so frankly expressed their disagreement with the government's repressive colonial policies. Dr. Hardie rebuked their "arrogant and overbearing repression," Mr. Whittemore accused them of failure to respect the principle of religious liberty. And Bishop Welch, despite his protestations of neutrality, pointedly noted that "instances are rare where Koreans did any violence until they were attacked by deadly weapons."[19]

Even more denunciatory of Japanese oppression were the missionaries in their private letters. A few, like Frank Herron Smith, who had been a missionary to the Japanese in Korea since the beginning of the occupation in 1905, were widely quoted as apologists for Japan's "benevolent" colonialism. In 1922 Smith was still writing of anti-government activities by Korean "malcontents," and praising conditions in Korea under Japanese administration.[20] But such cases were the exception, not the rule. In ever-increasing numbers the missionaries rallied to express their direct sympathies with the movement.

At first the missionaries simply reported their outrage at what they were witnessing in Korea, and tried by various means to evade Japanese censorship and convey their protests to the outside world. Some of the earliest reports were taken to China by Mr. E. W. Thwing, Oriental Secretary to the International Reform Bureau, who was visiting missionaries in P'yŏngyang and Sonch'on (Syenchun) just as the demonstrations broke out. Released to the foreign press in China, their publication caused a sensation. The *Peking and Tientsin Times,* March 15, 1919, carried the headline: THE KOREAN REVOLT. AUTHENTIC STORIES FROM MISSIONARIES. CAUSE AND CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT.[21]

> A missionary writes from Sensen, [Sŏnch'ŏn] Korea, March 11th, 1919, as follows: 'In this letter let me tell you something of the Independent Movement in Korea, its cause, character, aim and hope. The cause of this movement lies in the ten years of oppression, cruel treatment, which these people have suffered from their ruthless conquerors. The Independent Movement in its character is most wonderful. It is a peaceful manifestation of the thoughts of the people... The people have no arms, and where the Christians have been in the majority, in almost every instance they have submitted to arrest and cruel beating without opposition. In cases where there has been bloodshed the soldiers have first fired on the helpless crowd and so infuriated the non-Christian patriots that they have returned violence for violence. What do the Koreans expect, what is their aim?... Their aim is by peaceful means to let the world know that they are unhappy under the Japanese rule, that they are not given freedom and justice and that they wish their condition changed. What do they hope for? First, that this awful military rule in Korea which is like that of the Huns in Belgium may be removed...

Then follow a number of eye-witness reports by missionaries of police violence and cruelty.[22]

If the first directed contribution of the missionaries to the movement was to alert the outside world through the press, their second was to bring forcibly to the attention of their own government representatives the facts of Japanese infringement on human rights in Korea. S. A. Moffett's first report on brutalities on March 5, for example, went to his mission board in New York for publication. Later, on April 7, 1919, he wrote directly to the American Consul General in Seoul, Leo Bergholz, reporting another outbreak of violence by the police and gendarmes, April 2 to 4. Students from mission schools had been dragged off and beaten, and the schools intimidated from opening for the spring term. The missionary houses were searched. On April 4, Moffett found some sixteen to twenty gendarmes already in his house. He asked if they had a search warrant. They did not. He said, "Of course you can forcibly search but it will be without my consent," and they went on with the search. He wrote:

> They were not rude or disrespectful and one said that he did not like the job but had to do as he was ordered... In my study among my secretary's papers in the drawer of his desk they found the following inconsequential things:
>
> 1. A copy of the program of the Prince Yi Memorial Service and the Independence service of March 1st written in ink in Korean.
> 2. An envelope directed to the Theological Seminary... containing five copies of the Independence Newspaper...
> 3. A small piece of paper with a statement in Korean of the number of men killed at Anju and the numbers of those who had taken part from the several villages of Anju in the demonstration.

None of the above had I ever seen before... (Then) they searched the outbuildings and the guest house. As we were trying to open the door of the guest house my secretary came out... They seized him, tied him and according to the statement of my two sons who saw it (I did not), they hit him, kicked him, punched him, his nose bleeding, and one man hit him across the cheek with a short whip. In the empty Korean house they found two copies of a mimeographed notice in Korean, thin paper rolled up into a small ball and thrown away. The detective told me that a boy had confessed that several of them had taken my mimeograph from the study and printed notices in that empty house... The whole population is fearful of unlawful beatings ...[23]

In Seoul a number of missionaries, including H. H. Underwood, E. W. Koons, W. G. Cram and Dr. Frank W. Schofield formed a committee of investigation to verify the facts of Japanese persecution of Christians.[24] Schofield wrote signed letters to the Japanese press denouncing the administration's mishandling of the situation.[25] Underwood managed to get an eye-witness account of the massacre and church-burning at Che-amni to friends in America where it was read into the *Congressional Record* of July 17, 1919.[26] S. A. Beck, a Methodist missionary with the American Bible Society in Korea, placed photographs of atrocities in the hands of Senator Norris of Nebraska who protested Japanese brutality in a fiery speech on the floor of the Senate on July 15, 1919.[27]

Mrs. W. L. Swallen of P'yŏngyang was the sister of Congressman William Ashbrook, a prominent Republican. Through her daughter Olivette, who was studying in Chefoo, China, she managed to get facts and case histories to her brother not only for publication in Ohio newspapers, but for official action by church groups in America, and eventually to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.[28] Mrs. Swallen wrote from P'yongyang, Apr. 23, 1919:

"My dearest Olivette: I am enclosing some of the things I have been gathering. When you have read them send them on to Wilbur (her son). He can send them on to Will (the congressman) and he can have them printed in the *Independent* if he won't put our name to it... We are neutral, but some of the true facts must be known... It would make your hair stand on end to hear some of the things we have heard. Just this p.m. Song *Moksa*... has just returned from Hanchung where his daughter-in-law was stripped of her clothing, and her hands tied behind her back, and she was tied up for five hours, that is, was hung up by her arms. When she was let down she could not get her arms in front of her body until some one rubbed them and helped her. It's been a month or more and she does not yet have the use of her hands. His son is in prison. She was used this way because she hollered, "Hurrah for Korea: Mansa.' The latest we have heard of the persecutions of the Christians was this p.m. and occurred at So-a-mul 20 *li* from here in Dr. Moffett's territory last Sunday. They, the police, went to the church, beat some of the officers in front of the pulpit, took the church rolls, hunted up the Christians and beat whole families from one house to another... We thought the statement which you saw—that 12,000 had been killed; 45,000 put in prison—was exaggerated, but many here think it is not exaggerated. The prisons are full everywhere... Don't worry... God is not dead; He loves these people more than we do...[29]

Among the documents and reports sent by Mrs. Swallen to her brother were page after page of eye-witness reports of atrocities collected by missionaries in P'yŏngyang, Chairyung, Syenchun, Seoul, Andong, Pusan and elsewhere. This was the third contribution of the missionary community to the Independence Movement: the collection of statistics and the verification of injustices. Here is a sample page:

Evangelistic Condition of Western Circuit, Pyeng Yang Station

Number of churches in district	58
Number meeting regularly	53
Number meeting irregularly	2
Number not meeting at all	3
Number burned	0
Number damaged	5
(The damage done being broken doors & windows, destruction of books, rolls, pulpits & lamps)	
Number of pastors in territory	14
Number on their job	9
(2 were hiding a while but working now)	
Number arrested, now in jail	3
Number unable to work	2
Number arrested, later released	1

Number of helpers (lay evangelists)	14
Number on their job	7
(Working carefully, but not doing much)	
Number arrested	0
Number not able to work	3

Remarks:
The church in general seems paralyzed. Men, especially are afraid to meet for worship for fear of being arrested. Particularly true is this of the officers... In most of the churches where pastors and helpers are at work, the work is done very quietly so as not to arouse suspicion. In some of the churches the people fear to have the helper call, least that call should subject them to suspicion and arrest. In four churches the fear of arrest is so great as to have greatly interfered with the farming. The men are not able to put in their crops.

Particular Instances Noted.
At Morak—where the people of a number of villages gathered for a demonstration..., the police, one Japanese and two Koreans, are said to have fired into the crowd, killing a number and wounding others. This enraged the crowd which surrounded the three policemen and killed the two Korean policemen. The Japanese, having sheltered in the police quarters, kept firing out of the window, whereupon the buildings were set on fire and the Japanese finally killed. After this, the gendarmerie of Kangsa were notified and gendarmes and police were sent who damaged the church, breaking doors, windows and lamps and made many arrests. The pastor's house is also said to have been damaged.

At Pansyuk—a number of officers came and tore down the bell-tower and... broke all the glass in the windows of both the church and school-house... All the Bibles, hymnbooks, church and Sunday School rolls and all the school records were destroyed... They caught and bound eight men whom they stripped and beat in the church yard; and one of these was burned with matches on the tenderest part of his body. This was told me in the presence of many others and by one of the men who was beaten...

Three women were stripped naked and beaten because they would not tell where their husbands were (most likely they did not know...) These three were Leader Paik's wife, Elder Choi's wife and Elder Cho's wife. The two former were beaten so badly that two weeks after when we were informed of this they were still not able to come to the church. The latter, Elder Cho's wife, herself told the missionary that she was taken out of her house by two officers, one a Japanese, the other a Korean, was taken away from the village by these two men, out to a pine grove... and forced to take off all her clothes and was beaten terribly there by them while sitting on the ground...[30]

The material quoted above is just one page of thousands which the missionaries of Korea filtered out through Japanese censorship, breaking down all efforts of the authorities to hide the "incident" from the world. One staid Presbyterian single lady, Miss Alice Butts, unblushingly carried some of the reports hidden in her whale-bone corset across the border into Manchuria. The whole extraordinary missionary effort to investigate, verify, collect reports and make the facts known was undoubtedly the greatest single reason for the sympathetic attention the Independence Movement received almost instantly from the world press. It was not, at first, an organized campaign. It was simply the spontaneous response of good-hearted, honest individuals who loved the Korean people and could not remain silent while they were being abused. And it was not consciously political. As Mrs. Swallen had written, "We are neutral, but the... true facts must be known."[31]

II. Official Missionary Reaction.

Even while Mrs. Swallen was writing those words, the officers of the largest Protestant mission in Korea, the Northern Presbyterians (now United Presbyterians) were meeting in executive session in Seoul, April 22-24, 1919, in a momentous session that was to carry the missionaries beyond mere neutrality. They were preparing a private but official position paper on the situation for their home church. It was the first, and remained the most thorough, statement of organized missionary attitude toward the Independence Movement to emanate from Korea—all the more important because it was not an emotional, individual response, but a carefully formulated statement of consensus. Although never published, and kept confidential in mission board headquarters in New York, it was vitally significant in setting the tone of the forthcoming American

churches' official protest which was issued through the Federal Council of Churches in July.[32] I have a carbon copy of the 52-page typed text. The full title is "The Present Movement for Korean Independence in its Relation to the Mission Work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). A *Private* Report Prepared for the Board of Foreign Missions By the Executive Committee of the Chosen Mission at Seoul, April 22nd-24th, 1919."[33]

It begins with a sketch of the historical background of the Japanese annexation, noting a Korean resistance movement from 1907 to 1909 that cost 21,000 Korean lives and 1,300 Japanese, but even-handedly paying tribute to the good intentions of the first Japanese Resident-General, Prince Ito. Singled out for special criticism in this section is the ominous omnipresence of the police and gendarmes in Korea and the crippling inadequacies of the Japanese judicial system. The ratio of police and gendarmes was one to every 1,224 Koreans and in the most recent year for which statistics were available (1916-17), "one person in every 200 living in Chosen experienced the judgment of the police box."[34] As for justice in the Japanese law courts, the report tersely sums up its complaints with the flat charge that under current procedures "there can be no security for either foreigner or Korean against injustice and inhuman treatment."[35]

Despite the severity of their criticisms, the missionaries took special pains not to appear disloyal to constituted government. They frankly admitted two earlier cases of confrontation between missions and the Japanese authorities. The first was the so-called Conspiracy Case of 1912 when missionaries and Korean Christians had been falsely accused (and six Koreans found guilty) of an alleged assassination attempt on the life of Governor-General Terauchi; the second was the refusal of the Presbyterian Mission to conform to the Imperial Educational Ordinance of 1915 which banned Bible teaching from the curriculum. Nevertheless, the report concluded, "All relations with the civil officials have continued cordial and harmonious."[36] Some may have noted the absence of any reference to Japanese military authorities in that phrase, but the fundamental principle of acceptance of governmental authority was reaffirmed as it had been formulated by the Mission Board in 1912 during the Conspiracy Case:

> It is the unvarying policy of the Boards and their Missions loyally to accept the constituted governments of the countries in which Mission work is carried on, to do everything in their power to keep the missionary enterprise free from political movements...[37]

The next section, however, is a rather startling contrast. The stern

religious convictions of these missionaries could never allow them to equate loyalty to government with silent assent to observed injustices and oppression. The following eleven pages of the report, sub-titled "History of the Independence Movement," is the most blistering indictment of Japan's fourteen years (1905-1919) of misrule on the peninsula ever drawn up by an official body of foreigners in Korea up to that time. In sixteen terse accusations, summarized from the Korean Declaration of Independence and other sources, it spells out the anguish and legitimate grievances of the Korean people and sympathetically reports their demand for independence. The grievances are bitter:[38]

> 1. Loss of independence through gradual assumption of power by the Japanese under various pretexts and in spite of explicit promises. The Korean people never assented to annexation...
> 2. Oppression by the military administration... It is asserted that the administration of the past nine years has been a reign of terror for the Koreans... contempt... oppression, injustice and brutality, whole-sale arrests... intimidation and torture...
> 3. No liberty of speech, press, assembly, or of conscience.
> 4. An intolerable system of police espionage...
> 5. Koreans have no share in the government...
> 6. Unjust discrimination in salaries...
> 7. Denationalization, an attempt... to make one race into another by restricting and regulating the racial language (Korean) and forcing the adoption of Japanese ideals... The two peoples are essentially different and Korea does not want Japanese ideals and institutions.
> 8. Unjust expatriation of all Korerans living abroad... and restriction of emigration.
> 9. Unjust expropriation of crown lands...
> 10. Discrimination in education...
> 11. Debauching and demoralizing Korean youth... The Japanese system of licenced prostitution has made vice more open and flagrant...
> 12. ...uncontrolled child labor and the practical enslavement of women operatives...
> 13. Unrestricted immigration of Japanese... forcing thousands of Koreans into Manchuria...
> 14. Annexation 'for the peace of the East,' as the Japanese

> claimed, is no longer thus justified, and independence should be restored.
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> 15. ... great material improvement... done ostensibly for Korea (is) really done for the Japanese in Korea... Annexation has meant the systematic exploitation of the country and its resources...
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> 16. The 33 signers of the original Declaration of Independence have been unjustly treated...

The demands of the Koreans, they conclude, are "nothing short of absolute independence." Had the authorities met the agitation in a more understanding way, the report says, the Koreans might have settled simply for reform, "but the use of sword and gun and fire has so roused the people that they will be more insistent than ever for absolute independence and the suppression of the present movement will doubtless only mean another outbreak later on."[39]

The concluding sections of the *Private Report* deal with a brief history of the current demonstrations and of the movement's relation to the Korean church and the missionaries. The general attitude of the missionary writers of the report is not left in doubt. They are obviously strongly sympathetic to the Korean cause. For example, with quiet approval they quote the answer of Yi Sang-Chay, of the Y.M.C.A., to police interrogators. "Who is the head of the movement?," he was asked. "Do you know?" "Yes," he said "Who? Tell us who," they asked eagerly. "God," he answered calmly. "God at the head and twenty million Koreans behind it."[40]

Church involvement, the report carefully points out, was not organizational except in the sense that all the teachings of the Christian faith are "unconscious preparation of the Christian community for taking part in such a movement." Church participation was through individual Christians of whom "ninety-nine percent plus are in their hearts in favor of the present movement."[41]

More directly pertinent to the subject of this paper is the section, "The Relation of Missionaries to the Movement."[42] The key phrase is: "No neutrality for brutality."[43] It marks a careful, measured step beyond the affirmations of political neutrality which up to then had always been the officially stated policy of the mission.

The step beyond neutrality was prefaced by a definition of the kind of neutrality which the missionaries felt that they had so far scrupulously observed. They had neither instigated nor advised an independence movement:

> Except for the admitted fact that they are propagators of a gospel which has more than once been accused of turning the world upside down, missionaries have had no direct relationship to this present movement... It arose without their knowledge. Their advice as to the inception and direction of the movement has not been sought...[44]

But neither would they allow themselves to be used to suppress the movement. They explicitly rejected the strenuous efforts of the Japanese authorities "to persuade the missionaries to side with the Government and use their influence direct and indirect for the suppression of the revolt"[45] In fact, they said, they no longer felt able to agree to any further conferences of the sort already held with Japanese leaders in March;[46] lest these be used to compromise them in the eyes of both Koreans and Japanese.[47]

Having thus expressed the kind of neutrality they could accept, they forthrightly rejected as cowardly and unchristian a neutrality which could demand the closing of the eyes to inhumanity and the silencing of the tongue to protest:

> It is too much to expect that missionaries representing the Gospel of Christ... should sit silent when inhuman atrocities are being inflicted upon a helpless and unresisting people. Even right thinking Japanese, Christian or non-Christian, would not do so... If reporting to the world the brutal inhumanity with which the revolt in this country is being suppressed be a breach of neutrality then the missionaries have laid themselves open to the charge. 'No neutrality for brutality'...[48]

Conclusions

This is a good point at which to bring to a close this brief survey of one important segment of foreign opinion of the Independence Movement in its earliest weeks.[49] Within less than sixty days missionary reaction, which was to have a formative influence on world opinion, had moved through five distinct stages.

The first was surprised non-participation. On March 1 the missionaries, close though they were to the Korean people, had no advance knowledge of the protests. The second was immediate sympathy. Missionaries were outraged by the brutality with which the authorities tried to suppress the movement; they sympathized with its goals, but hesitated publicly to endorse its methods. The third stage was indirect support. Within a week missionaries were actively seeking to publicize the protests

abroad, asking recognition of the justice of the Korean demands, and criticizing the Japanese handling of the situation. The fourth stage was direct but involuntary involvement. In the early days of the movement missionaries had been struck, beaten, detained and, by April, one had been arrested and found guilty of direct participation in the movement.

Finally, by the end of April, the first official but still private statement of organized missionary support for the protests was issued and circulated abroad. Thus the Korean Independence Movement found in this quick sequence of events and reactions its strongest and most effective source of foreign support: the community of Western missionaries in Korea.

NOTES

1. *Korea Handbook of Missions 1920.* Federal Council of Korea: Yokohama, 1920. The page of statistics inserted at the back omits 39 O.M.S., Salvation Army and unattached missionaries listed on pp. 60-62. The Seoul Press, 1920, states there were then 136 Catholic and 4 Orthodox missionaries in Korea.

2. The best overall survey and critical analysis of the movement is by Frank Baldwin, "The March First Movement: Korean Challenge and Japanese Response." Columbia, Ph. D. dissertation, 1969. It is particularly valuable for its use of little known Japanese sources. Korean sources are too numerous to mention. Standard works are the *Samil undong sillok* by Yi Yong-Nak (Record of the March First Movement, Pusan: Samil Dongjihoe, 1969); the National History Compilation Committee, *Hanguk Tongnip Undong-sa* (History of the Korean Independence Movement), 5 vols. Seoul, 1965-1970.

3. *Peking and Tientsin Times,* March 15, 1919.

4. *The Korean "Independence Agitation": Articles Reprinted from the "Seoul Press."* The Seoul Press: Seoul, May 15, 1919, p. 1ff. The editorial states, in part, "... missionaries were very good friends and assistants of the administration in the past, as they continue to be... They have always striven to make their followers law-abiding and, when occasion demanded, were active in restraining them from going to extremes... We... positively assert that no foreign missionaries are implicated in the recent trouble..." (March 14)

5. The slogan "Choson tongnip mansei," which can be roughly translated "Long live Korean independence," was popularly shortened to simply "Mansei."

6. Fifty-four years later, my brother James who had smuggled out the flag in 1920 when he went to school in the U.S., brought it back to keep my father's promise and fly it again on the Soongjun University campus. See account in *Today at Soongjun Univ.*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Nov. 1974), and a handwritten memo by James Moffett dated Sept. 10, 1974.

7. Personal notes, Mrs. L. F. Moffett. March, 1919.

8. Frank W. Schofield, "What Happened on Sam Il Day March 1, 1919" in In-Hah Jung, ed., *The Feel of Korea* (Seoul: Hollym, 1966) p. 277

9. Shannon McCune's, account of the activities of the McCune family in Sŏnchŏn on March 1, and of their father in P'yŏngyang on March 1, and in Seoul on March 3 corroborates this observation. Shannon McCune, *The Mansei Movement,* Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii, Center for Korean Studies, 1976. pp. 5-8, 16-19.

10. Charles F. Bernheisel, *Forty-One Years in Korea* (unpublished manuscript in my possession), p. 76 f., from a letter dated April 4, 1919.

11. Letter, dated P'yŏngyang, March 5, 1919, with the added notation to a colleague who was to get the letter out: "Dear Blair: Send copies to the Board or use in any way you may wish. I told these same things to Japanese officials here and in Seoul. S.A.M."

12. *Report of First Session of Unofficial Conference, Chosen Hotel, March 22nd, 1919; Second Session, March 14th* (sic), 1919. (Unpublished typescript), 10 pp. The missionies were Bishop Welch, Airson, Moffett, Gale, Gerdine, Hardic, Brockman, Whittemore, Noble and Bunker.

13. *Op. cit.*, p. 2.

14. *Op. cit.*, p. 6, 7

15. *Op. cit.*, p. 6

16. *Op. cit.*, p. 4

17. *Op. cit.*, p. 2

18. A. J. Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case.* Northfield, Mass., 1912, p. 3.

19. *Report of First Session..., op. cit.*, pp. 2, 6 etc.

20. F. H. Smith, "The Japanese Work in Korea," *The Christian Movement in Japan, Korea, Formosa..., 1922.* Japan, 1922, pp. 360-365.

21. Perhaps George S. McCune.

22. *Peking and Tientsin Times,* March 15, 1919. The same issue carried other missionary letters dated Pyeng Yang, March 8 and Syenchur (Sŏnch'ŏn) March 11. Subsequent issues of that paper and the *Peking Leader* were full of letters from Korea. Information from a letter from S. A. Moffett (Mar. 5) appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* as early as March 13, but without attribution.

23. Letter, S. A. Moffett to the Hon. Leo Bergholz, April 7, 1919.

24. *The Japan Advertiser,* Tokyo. Aug. 6, 1920

25. He was still writing in November. See *Japan Advertiser,* Nov. 29, 1919.

26. *The Congressional Record.* July 17, 1919, p. 2855 ff.

27. *Ibid.* July 15, 1919, p. 2735 f. See also July 18, p. 2956; Aug. 18 p. 4194-4196.

28. *Ibid.* Oct. 22.1979, p. 7757.

29. Letter, Mrs. W. L. Swallen to Olivette Swallen, Apr. 23, 1919.

30. The report consists of four typewritten pages. The Western circuit was in the care of Rev. W. L. Swallen. In a handwritten note at the end, Mrs. Swallen adds: "Dear Olivette: I am sending you a partial report of the Western Circuit. I wonder if you could compile some we are sending, have them copied or printed to send to some of our friends. I shall send you a list of names. Please send the sentence of Mr. Mowry to Uncle Will (Ashbrook)." (Eli Mowry was sentenced by a Japanese court on Apr. 19 to six months' penal servitude.)

A similar half-page of statistics compiled by Moffett for Whang Hai Presbytery (incomplete) lists 12 pastors "beaten, otherwise abused, imprisoned, or compelled to flee;" 13 helpers imprisoned with hard labor, beaten, abused or compelled to flee; 27 elders, 28 leaders, 69 deacons, 31 Sunday School teachers, 42 school teachers, and 341 other Christians so treated. Total 563 of whom 7 were shot and 4 were killed.

31. *Ibid.*

32. The Commission on Relations with the Orient of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, *The Korean Situation*. New York, 1919.

33. Hereafter referred to as: Chosen Mission, *A Private Report*... Members of the Executive were Whittemore, Erdman, Adams, Hunt, Roberts, Kagan, and Koons. (Minutes & Reports of the 34th Annual Meeting... Chosen Mission... 1919. p. iii)

34. Chosen Mission, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 6, quoting A. J. Brown, *The Conspiracy Case, op. cit.*, p. 3.

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-20.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 12 f.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 17

41. *Ibid.*, p. 23

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-36

43. *Ibid.*, p. 33

44. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 32

46. See above, p. 7 ff.

47. *Executive Committee, Private Report, op. cit.*

48. *Ibid.*, p. 33

49. I am glad to acknowledge an indebtedness to Frank Baldwin's lectures and writings on the Independence Movement. My own sources corroborate some of his conclusions on missionary participation.

The Martyrdom of Paul Yun: Western Religion and Eastern Ritual in Eighteenth Cent Korea

by Donald L. Baker

On December 8, 1791, in front of the P'ungnam Gate in Chŏnji capital of Chŏlla Province, Paul Yun was beheaded for his destructi his family's ancestral tablets. King Chŏngjo had ordered the executi this Catholic member of Korea's *yangban* elite because of his obedienc command from a European bishop in Peking to defy Korean law custom requiring the use of ancestral tablets in Confucian mourning r Paul Yun thus entered history as one of Korea's earliest Christian ma three years before the first Catholic priest arrived on the peninsula to p the Gospel to the Korean people.

The story of Paul Yun, how he and his friends and relatives converted to Catholicism and how their new faith led them into co with their Confucian government and society, can tell us much abou nature of Korean values and beliefs two centuries ago. An examinati this clash between Western religion and Eastern ritual may offer us insight into fundamental differences between Confucian and Chr approaches to truth, morality, and the nature of man and society.

Paul Yun died because of his belief that men have a higher loyalty that owed to their society and government. His conviction that men s times have to be willing to sacrifice even their lives if their integrity conscience so demand makes the story of his execution more than ju interesting historical anecdote about a clash between Catholic doctrin Confucian ceremony two hundred years ago. While the specific iss ancestral tablets for which Paul Yun gave up his life in 1791 may no l be relevant today, conflicts between the dictates of conscience an demands of society still arise. A look at the dilemma faced by Paul Y 1791 can help us reflect on our moral priorities in 1980.

I. The Early Reaction to Catholicism: Curiosity and Critic

Catholic ideas arrived in Korea long before the first missionarie early as the seventeenth century we find Korean writers such as Yu M in (1559-1623) and Yi Su-gwang (1563-1628) discussing the Jesuit mis

TRANSACTIONS

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